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UNCLAS STATE 012344

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT IN PARA 1)

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CASC](#) [OTRA](#) [ASEC](#) [HT](#)

SUBJECT: TRAVEL WARNING: HAITI

¶1. The Department of State warns U.S. citizens of the situation in Haiti in the aftermath of a powerful earthquake, measuring 7.0 magnitude, that struck Haiti near Port-au-Prince on January 12. The Department of State has ordered the departure of all non-emergency U.S. government personnel from Haiti.

¶2. U.S. citizens are strongly urged to avoid travel to Haiti. The January 12 earthquake caused significant damage to key infrastructure, and access to basic services is extremely limited. Additional aftershocks remain a possibility. All forms of communication within Haiti are limited. The country is experiencing a severe shortage of food, water, transportation, and adequate shelter. All commercial airline carriers have suspended their operations until further notice. Medical facilities are operating beyond maximum capacity, and the lack of adequate sanitation poses serious health risks. Despite good intentions, travelers may increase the burden on a system already struggling to support those in need on the ground. In addition, the Embassy's ability to provide emergency consular services is limited. The following website has information on how best to assist in the Haiti earthquake relief effort:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/01/15/hel p-haiti>.

¶3. In the event of an aftershock, persons outside should avoid falling debris by moving to open spaces, away from walls, windows, buildings, and other structures that may collapse. If indoors, persons should take shelter beside furniture, not underneath. Experts believe that curling into a fetal position beside a table, desk or couch creates a "survivable void" inside collapsed buildings. Avoid damaged buildings and downed power lines. Do not use matches, lighters, candles, or any open flame in case of disrupted gas lines.

¶4. The U.S. Embassy has evacuated more than 15,000 U.S. citizens from Haiti and evacuation flights continue to depart the International Airport in Port-au-Prince. U.S. citizens wishing to depart Haiti should make their way to the airport between 4PM and 8PM. They are encouraged to

bring their passport and identification, and any available food, water, and supplies, as facilities at the airport are limited. U.S. citizens in Haiti should contact friends and relatives outside of Haiti to inform them of their welfare.

¶5. The U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince has assembled a task force at the Embassy which is taking calls as conditions permit. The Embassy is working to identify U.S. citizens in Haiti who need urgent assistance and to identify sources of assistance.

¶6. U.S. citizens are urged to contact the Embassy via email at ACSPaP@state.gov to request assistance. U.S. citizens in Haiti may also call the Embassy's Consular Task Force at 509-2229-8942, 509-2229-8089, 509-2229-8322, or 509-2229-8672. The State Department in Washington, D.C., has also created a task force to monitor the emergency. Persons in the U.S. or Canada with information or inquiries about U.S. citizens in Haiti may contact the Haiti Task Force at 888-407-4747. Outside of the U.S. and Canada, call 202-501-4444. For further information and updates, please see the State Department's Consular Affairs website.

¶7. Minimize considered.
CLINTON